

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-12

AID-20 COME-00 EB-11 FRB-02 TRSE-00 XMB-07 OPIC-12

CIEP-02 LAB-06 SIL-01 OMB-01 RSR-01 /148 W

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R 181403 Z APR 73

FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1578

C O N F I D E N T I A L TUNIS 2168

FROM NEWSOM

E . O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, TS, US

SUBJEC: POLICY TOWARD TUNISIA

1. COMING FROM MOROCCO AND ALGERIA ONE IS DEEPLY IMPRESSED IN TUNISIA WITH MANIFEST DESIRE FOR CLOSE RELATIONSHIP WITH US. PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA, WHILE IN MANY SENSES THINKING IN THE PAST, IS PREPARED, AS FEW OTHER LEADERS, TO DEFEND U. S. PUBLICLY AND PRIVATELY. WHILE HE TENDS EXAGGERATE HIS INFLUENCE HE IS STILL PERSONALITY OF MAJOR IMPORTANCE.

2. IN THIS CONTEXT I DOUBT IT IS IN OUR INTEREST TO TALK OF " PHASING DOWN" OR PHASING OUT" OUR AID RELATIONSHIP. I HAVE SOUGHT TO CONVEY TO BOTH TUNISIANS AND COUNTRY TEAM MESSAGE WHICH I BELIEVE SHOULD MORE PROPERLY REPRESENT OUR POLICY. THIS IS THAT PRESSURES ON US RESOURCES AND DIMINISHING AVAILABILITY OF PL 480 WILL RESULT IN REDUCTIONS IN U. S. AID TO TUNISIA. THESE CIRCUMSTANCES DO NOT INDICATE ANY LESSENING OF RESPECT FOR OUR INTEREST IN TUNISIA BUT ARE NATURAL RESULT OF PRESSURES ON RESOURCES, TUNISIA'S OWN IMPROVING ECONOMIC SITUATION AND INCREASED ACTIVITY BY INTERNATIONAL LENDING

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AGENCIES. TUNISIANS THEMSELVES RECOGNIZE DIMINISHED
ROLE OF FOREIGN AID IN THEIR NEW FOUR- YEAR PLAN. UNDER
SUCH CIRCUMSTANCE IT IS IMPORTANT FOR U. S. TO KNOW
TUNISIAN ECONOMIC OBJECTIVES. WE WILL CONTINUE TO PLAY
ROLE EVEN THROUGH IT MAY INCREASINGLY BE SECONDARY TO
OTHER DONORS AND TO TUNISIA' S OWN GROWING INPUT.

3. TUNISIANS HAVE APPEARED TO UNDERSTAND THIS MESSAG E,
STRESSING ONLY THEIR DESIRE TO KNOW AS MUCH IN ADVANCE
FOR PLANNING PURPOSES A REALISTIC ESTIMATE OF OUR ANNUAL
LEVEL.

4. NONE OF THE CONVERSATIONS HAVE PLACED GREAT EMPHASIS
ON SECURITY EQUIPMENT NEEDS, AN AREA WHERE WE HAVE
GREATEST DIFFICULTY. HERE BELIEVE OUR TIES AND
INTERESTS CAN PARTICULARLY BE SERVED BY PRECISE
GESTURES SUCH AS SIXTH FLEET HELP DURING FLOOD
SUPPLEMENTING INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT COMMITMENTS TO
ARMED SERVICES. PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA' S REQUEST FOR
SURPLUS EARTH- MOVING EQUIPMENT IS PERHAPS ANOTHER EXAMPLE.
I SHOULD LIKE TO RESERVE JUDGMENT ON RECOMMENDATION FOR
LOAN OF NAVAL CRAFT UNTIL FURTHER DISCUSSION AFTER MY
RETURN.

SEELYE

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*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

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